Claims

What is claimed is:

1. A sensing apparatus comprising a housing and sensing means, characterised in that the housing comprises a plurality of separable elements to which data acquired by the sensing means is transferred, and which are releasable, after data transfer, from the housing.

2. A sensing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the sensing means includes or is connected to electronic memory means which temporarily stores the acquired data.

3. A sensing apparatus according to claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the sensing apparatus further comprises an actuable port means, openable to release the separable elements.

4. A sensing apparatus according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the separable elements each comprise a rigid casing with a sealable aperture, the casing surrounding data storage means in which the acquired data is stored for transfer to the surface.

5. A sensing apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the sealable aperture is formed by an aperture surrounded by a sealing material, with the sealing material being heat treatable within the housing so as to provide a fluid-tight seal which is continuous with the casing surface.

6. A sensing apparatus according to any of the

preceding claims, wherein the separable elements are spherical.

7. A sensing apparatus according to claim 6, wherein each separable element comprises two hollow metal hemi-spheres, joined by a plastics seal to form a sphere.

8. A sensing apparatus according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the housing of the sensing apparatus and casings of the separable elements are formed from plastics material or metal.

9. A sensing apparatus according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the separable elements are configured to be either neutrally buoyant or buoyant, in relation to well fluids.

10. A sensing apparatus according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the separable elements have a diameter in the range of 1 to 10cm.

11. A sensing apparatus according to any of the claims 1 to 9, wherein the separable elements have a diameter in the range 1 to 5cm.

12. A method of acquiring data from downhole, comprising placing downhole a sensing apparatus containing a number of separable elements and releasing the elements to carry acquired data to the surface as required.

13. Apparatus and method substantially as herein described with reference to, and as illustrated in, the accompanying drawings.